Fig. 1. Areas in Iowa cited in this paper are shown on this map. The inset shows towns in north-central Iowa in the vicinity of the 1978 "Bigfoot" stories. Map drawn by the author.

Fig. 2. Ellis Shellmeyer of West Bend, Iowa, shows casts he made at the West Des Moines River. Photograph courtesy of Jane Whitmore and The Democrat, Emmetsburg, Iowa.

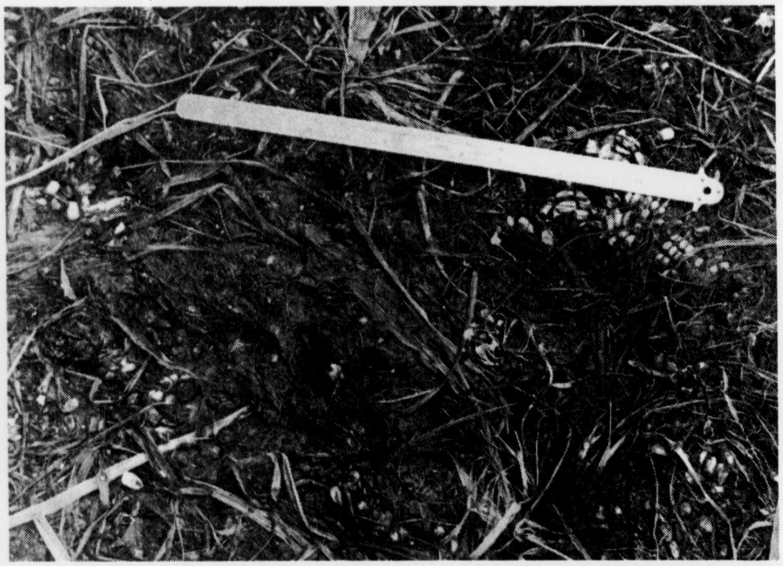

Fig. 3.
Print found beside a corn crib where Robert Newell IV reported seeing a large animal. The track parallels the ruler with the back at the right and the apparent toes to the left. The overall length of the twelve-inch ruler is fourteen and one-half inches measured end to end. (See Fig. 8b for an associated sketch.) Humboldt Republican and Independent Photo taken by Steven Hakeman.

STORIES OF "BIGFOOT" IN IOWA DURING 1978 AS DRAWN FROM NEWSPAPER SOURCES

BY MARK A. HALL

Stories of large hairy animals labeled "Bigfoot" reports were told in north-central Iowa from July into October 1978. Drawing from newspaper accounts and the experience of newspaper people in the area the stories are given in detail. The details contrast with other "Bigfoot" accounts from South Dakota that were previously described. The stories from the two locales demonstrate a readily apparent variety in "Bigfoot" material. Also the track attributed to the animal in Iowa is distinctive, differs from those in South Dakota, and presents similarities to tracks recorded elsewhere in the Midwest and recorded on the continent of Asia as "Abominable Snowman" footprints. The complication of false tracks deliberately produced seems to be present in the Iowa accounts as well.

From the end of July into October 1978 stories of "Bigfoot" circulated in north-central Iowa, adding to the ever-growing accumulation of such reports in North America. The previous year numerous reports of animals meeting the simple definition of "Bigfoot" (i.e., a large hairy manlike animal) were made in South Dakota. A recounting of those stories as they appeared in newspapers indicated some coherency when the stories were taken at face value (Hall 1978). The new stories from Iowa differ from those in South Dakota in various ways. Especially so because a variety of tracks are involved. They demonstrate a variety in "Bigfoot" material both by the complications of possibly misleading information (false tracks) and as previously suggested (Hall 1978:64) by a possible variety of types among animals predominantly responsible for "Bigfoot" stories.

Stories of an "ape-like creature" were reported to authorities in Iowa in the summer of 1978 and soon the label of "Bigfoot" was applied to the suspected animal as reports continued. This label does not contribute to understanding the occurrence of these stories. The word is vaguely defined and loosely applied to modern reports of both puzzling animals and large tracks that are not readily explained. We will consider the specific animal described in Iowa and how it may have a place in the history of peculiar primates whose existences are only conjectured at this time.

Fourteen stories are related below from newspaper sources in the order they occurred according to their tellers. Different tracks involved in the stories are discussed. Some of the stories are interpreted in the light of accounts with similarities previously reported in Iowa and the Midwest. The stories are considered further in relation to primates suspected as explaining some of the reports of "Abominable Snowmen" in Asia.

As always the nature of information as it appears in newspapers should be kept in mind when looking at this material. The anonymity of some sources, second-hand accounts, and apparent discrepancies all reduce the accuracy and completeness of the experiences related.

THE STORIES

Each story is numbered. Date and time of day are given as clearly as can be determined from the sources. The location of the story is given in relation to a town and the county in Iowa (Figure 1). The principle participants in each story are listed when their names are given. The story is then related.

No. 1. 27 July 1978. Between 9:30 and 10:00 P.M.

Ottosen, Humboldt County.

Donnette Henkins, 9 years old.

Miss Henkins went outside and walked around the corner of her house. There she encountered a strange animal. The animal growled and then ran away. She ran inside screaming and told her mother, Mrs. Jan Henkins. She was so frightened that she was taken to stay at the home of relatives in the town of Livermore. From her "close look" at the animal she described it as four to five feet tall, dark and hairy, with piercing deep-set eyes and long white teeth. This description was relayed to the newspapers by Humboldt County Sheriff Marvin Andersen (Algona Upper Des Moines 1978a; Algona Kossuth County Advance 1978a). Also the animal reportedly "loped off on two feet" (Hakeman 1978a).

No. 2. 27 July 1978. Between 9:30 and 10:00 P.M. Took place after No. 1.

Ottosen, Humboldt County.

Mrs. Jan Henkins.

Mrs. Henkins walked downtown to a pop machine with a neighbor and another friend. In the vicinity of the old Ottosen school they saw an animal like the one described by Donnette Henkins. It came out from between two buildings and then disappeared (Algona Upper Des Moines 1978a; Hakeman 1978a).

Days later Nos. 1 and 2 were made publicly known following the report of No. 4 below. Then people recalled that dogs were "going crazy" all over Ottosen on Thursday night, 27th July (Hall 1978b). Sheriff Andersen later said of the animal, "We talked to some adults who had seen it on Thursday night, and they told us the reason they didn't call then was they felt it sounded so fantastic that everybody would think they were seeing things" (Hall 1978a).

No. 3. 30 July 1978. Nighttime.

Ottosen, Humboldt County.

Dawn Henkins, 11 years old.

Miss Henkins was riding a bicycle when she came face-to-face with an animal. She returned home screaming and hysterical. Mrs. Jan Henkins, her mother, went outside with a neighbor and saw an animal that looked like an ape standing behind a vacant building (Algona Kossuth County Advance 1978a).

No. 4. 31 July 1978. Afternoon.

East edge of Ottosen, Humboldt County.

Three boys, aged 10 to 12, from the Bennett, Masters, and Wolfe families.

The three boys saw an animal near a boarded-up shed in the northeast part of town. The animal ran into a cornfield. The mother of one of the boys, Mrs. Gary Masters, called the sheriff. The names of the boys were not printed in newspapers at the request of one parent because the children were being ridiculed (Hall 1978b). Sheriff Andersen obtained this description of the animal. It was "about five feet in height, with a large wide forehead, a flat-nosed face and deep-set eyes." The animal was dark brown and stood "kind of hunched over." It dropped down on all fours when it ran away (Hall 1978a). Further it was reported that when the animal ran it moved alternately on two and then on four feet (Hakeman 1978a).

Ruth Hall, staff writer for the Fort Dodge Messenger, obtained the following account of this incident from the mother of one of the boys.

> The woman said the boys were walking near an old boarded-up shed...when they saw a cat that had been badly chewed up. The boys saw that the screen across a 12 by 24 inch opening in the shed had been pushed in, and they heard a noise inside. One of the boys threw a rock into the shed and they saw a "black furry head" move inside, the woman said. She said the boys were

horrified and ran to the street, where they stopped and looked back and saw "something real dark" running among bins near the elevator.

After reporting the incident to one of the boys' mothers, they saw the creature again near the county shop and ran after it. The woman said she asked the boys why they ran after the animal, and they told her they "figured it was more scared of us than we were of it." They saw the animal in a cornfield, and the woman said her son told her "it just stood there and wondered about us." The boys and Mrs. Henkins both said the creature "doesn't do anything until you do," but "when it moves, it moves real fast."

The woman said four dogs on chains in yards here have been killed during the past month, and there have been several reports of cats bitten or injured. Two puppies with a mother dog on the back porch were bitten and killed, and penned rabbits were also mutilated, she said.

The boys said that two Dobermans kenneled near the shed "just went wild" when they flushed the animal out of the building... (Hall 1978b).

Sheriff Marvin Andersen and Deputy Perry Slaikeu searched the cornfield that afternoon. They found possible foot tracks five or six inches long with the appearance of three claws at the front and one at the back (Hall 1978a). Also they found some corn leaves peeled back and kernels gone from the cob (Algona Upper Des Moines 1978a). Later the indentations considered as possible tracks were judged to have been caused by water dripping off leaves of corn (Hakeman 1978a).

NOTE: In mid-August newspapers noted the absence of further animal reports at that time (Fort Dodge Messenger 1978a; Algona Upper Des Moines 1978b).

No. 5. 3 September 1978. About 1:00 A.M.
Ottosen, Humboldt County.
Mrs. Ed "Twig" Schumacher.

Mrs. Schumacher reported hearing "a deep, roaring-like growl which lessened and then got higher like a whistle or a lady's scream." She attributed this sound to the animal and also said the animal was seen in town earlier the same night by Pat Henkins (Algona Kossuth County Advance 1978b).

No. 6. About 7 September 1978.
Brown's Bridge over the West Des Moines River, three miles west and one mile south of West Bend, Palo Alto County.
Ellis Shellmeyer.

The owner of a West Bend clothing store told Ellis Shellmeyer, a retired barber, that he had seen large footprints beneath the bridge on the West Des Moines River. Mr. Shellmeyer and August Shafer drove to the site and found the prints. They returned to West Bend to obtain plaster and a camera. Then color photographs were made of the prints and were given to Iowa Conservation Officer Bill Basler. Plaster casts were made from some prints (Figure 2).

According to Mr. Shellmeyer the river is shallow beneath the bridge and quite muddy. Two dozen prints were found on the south side of the bridge on a sandbar. The prints were described as 16 inches long and 5 inches wide with four definite "claws" (the longest of these measuring three inches). The overall shape of the print was like that of a human foot. The stride of the prints was described as measuring 38 inches "from toe to toe in one step" (Whitmore 1978; Algona Kossuth County Advance 1978c).

No. 7. 11 September 1978. 12:30 to about 2:30 A.M.

A farm three miles northwest of Ottosen, in Kossuth County.

Jennings Dodrill, Anna Dodrill and her brother Elery Lynch.

The site of this story is in Kossuth County, but sheriffs' offices in Kossuth and Humboldt Counties were both notified. Ruth Hall of the Fort Dodge Messenger recorded this account of the incident obtained from Humboldt County Deputy Sheriff Dick Jergens.

> "It all started about 12:30 Monday morning when the Dodrills heard a kind of whining noise," Jergens said. "They thought one of their dogs was caught in a fence or something, so they went to check and the noise stopped." Jergens said Mrs. Dodrill's brother had just arrived from out of state, and he and the Dodrills were playing cards in the kitchen about an hour after they heard the whining noise. "They heard a sort of a growl several times, and then a deep, coarse noise that went into something like a woman's screaming," Jergens said. "They said it just made their hair stand on end." Jergens said they got a gun and backed a car around to shine lights on the area where the noise was coming from, but they couldn't see anything. He said the Dodrill dogs refused to leave the house when the animal started screaming.
>
> Later Mrs. Dodrill wanted to do her dishes before she went to bed and she asked her brother to stay in the kitchen with her, Jergens said. She had just straightened up after putting soap under the sink when she found herself face to face with the creature which was staring in a large window over the sink, he said. "She said it scared her and startled her so bad, she couldn't tell us much about its mouth," Jergens said. "But she noticed that it had a wide nose with no hair around it and a forehead that protruded, like a big bump. She said the face was black and hairy-like, but the thing she remembers most was that the eyes seemed to be just glowing red," Jergens said. Mrs. Dodrill's brother ran out of the house and saw something that looked large, black and hairy going across a four-foot wooden fence, Jergens said. Jergens said the window above the sink was about 6½ to 7 feet off the ground. There are no other farms for about a mile each way from the Dodrill acreage.
>
> Jergens said Kossuth County Sheriff Bill Lampright interviewed neighbors who had tape-recorded a strange screaming noise they heard recently. However, Lampright said the sounds on the recording were not identifiable as anything other than usual creatures (Hall 1978c).

Later one part of this account was disputed. Mrs. Dodrill told the Algona Kossuth County Advance that following the appearance of a face at the window her brother got Mr. Dodrill out of bed and the two men went outside with gun and flashlights but saw and heard nothing. The Advance was unable to reach Jergens for comment, and the discrepancy went unresolved (Algona Kossuth County Advance 1978b).

No. 8. 12 September 1978. 4:25 A.M.

A farm one and one-half miles southeast of Ottosen, Humboldt County.

Robert B. Newell IV, 18 years old.

The eldest son of the Newell family, Robert, usually rises at 4:15 A.M. to prepare for work. About 4:25 he was alerted by a loud noise and went to his bedroom window. He saw a large, dark, hairy creature making a whining sound while standing by a pump 50 feet from the house. The animal was illuminated by a yardlight 75 feet from the house. It ran to a corn crib 180 feet away. It moved in and around the crib, a portable grain elevator, and the back of a manure spreader. Newell thought the animal was looking for something to eat. It stood by the entrance to the crib for a while before moving around another storage bin and out of sight to the south. The animal was in view for two to three minutes. Mr. Newell dressed and went to work in Humboldt. There he called the sheriff's office to report what he had seen. That evening he told the

rest of his family. They searched around the crib and found a footprint that they tried to protect from rain that fell that day and the next (Algona Kossuth County Advance 1978b; Hakeman 1978b).

Steven Hakeman, News Editor for the Humboldt Independent, saw the track and described it: "The track roughly resembles a hand print, with the fingers close together and thumb out at a 45 degree angle. It measures eleven inches long and nine inches wide at its widest point. The impression was approximately a half-inch deep" (Hakeman 1978b). Also he took a photograph of the track that had deteriorated due to rainfall (Figure 3). Humboldt County Sheriff Dick Jergens viewed the print and said it appeared to him to be a composite of several pig tracks. Pigs are penned on the farm some yards from the corn crib. Mr. Newell said none had been loose as far as he knew (Hakeman 1978b).

In an interview Mr. Newell said, "I'd say it was at least six feet tall, and he moved real fast when he moved. He was dark and had long shaggy hair, and stood with a real bad slouch" (Hakeman 1978b). Mr. Newell offered to take a lie detector test, but the Humboldt County Sheriff's office had no plans to do so or to take any other special action (Algona Kossuth County Advance 1978b).

No. 9. Mid-September 1978. Midnight.
Three miles northeast of Humboldt, Humboldt County.
Unnamed family.

A family called the county sheriff reporting strange howls coming from a ravine near their home. The source seemed to be moving. Sheriff Marvin Andersen visited the area the next day and found some trampled brush but no tracks (Klaus 1978a, 1978c).

No. 10. 24 September 1978. Evening.
Near Bradgate, Humboldt County.
Unnamed young people.

A creature was reported to the sheriff's office as having been seen in a farm field about one mile away from some young people. A deputy investigated and found a tandem farm disc with its arms extended upward (Klaus 1978b).

No. 11. 27 September 1978. Evening
A farm south of Renwick, Humboldt County.
Forty high school students.

Gathered to build a homecoming float, the students reported to authorities that they had seen two creatures, one with red eyes and a second with blue eyes, in a cornfield. Officers checked the area and found nothing (Klaus 1978b).

No. 12. 27 September 1978. 7:30 P.M.
A farm field, four miles northwest of Renwick, Humboldt County.
Mark Thompson (Figure 5), 16 years old.

Thompson was driving a pickup on a lane beside a bean field where his father and brother were combining beans. He stopped the truck to watch an animal walking in the field. It was about seven feet tall and was covered with brownish-black hair. It looked back at Thompson. When he honked his horn the animal turned away and walked very fast toward a wooded creek bed (Hall 1978d, 1978e).

The next evening Cathy Mesicek, a correspondent for the Fort Dodge Messenger and the Eagle Grove Eagle, found footprints (Figure 4) in the field that were two inches deep and larger than human feet. The stride was described as greater than a human stride (Hall 1978d).

One unnamed person was reported to have visited this field on 30th September and to have found footprints that went into a marshy area and out of sight in tall weeds.

They were fourteen inches long and two inches deep (Klaus 1978b).

Following Thompson's report Vern Grebner, who farms near the site, related that he was breaking a colt in that field at dusk on the 25th of September (Hall 1978e; Braband 1978).

On the 29th of September Cathy Mesicek was showing Ken Braband, News Editor of the Eagle Grove Eagle, the prints she had found in the field. Vern Grebner arrived and identified those tracks as being left by the colt he was riding earlier that week. He indicated that he thought he was the cause of Thompson's report by his appearance on horseback as he rode on the other side of a weed patch from where he had seen people combining and had heard a horn honking (Braband 1978).

No. 13. During the last week in September 1978. Nighttime.

A cornfield two miles south of Renwick, Homboldt County.

Blaine McCurry, 16 years old; Richard Rasmussen, 17 years old; and unnamed others (Figure 5).

A group of youths visited a cornfield where McCurry had previously heard something walking on two feet and tearing ears of corn off stalks. According to Rasmussen they shined a flashlight into the field and saw two eyes even with the top of the corn. The eyes would duck down when the light was cast on them but were back each time the light was cast in the field again. This animal remained in the same area of the field for about one hour. In daylight this cornfield was found to have areas of trampled corn stalks in paths and circles as much as ten feet across. During the evening of 28th September some teenagers were searching abandoned buildings near this cornfield when they heard a high-pitched scream nearby. Such screaming was also heard by young people searching the area of No. 12 (Hall 1978e).

Later the suggestion was made that the youths had seen the red eyes of a deer, saying "it is not uncommon for deer to nestle in corn fields in groups of three, four, or five and trample down corn stalks" (Braband 1978).

No. 14. 3 October 1978. 10:30 P.M.

Clarion, Wright County.

Le Ann (Mrs. Arlyn) Tonderum, 25 years old.

According to a report made to police Mrs. Tonderum was putting away dishes when she looked out her kitchen window. She saw a very large shadow or image at the window. She reported a round figure with a bright, small, oval, yellow light of reflection in the middle. Mrs. Tonderum's mother, Mrs. Burton Bruhl, gave additional information. Her daughter told her the figure looked like it had a head set down on the shoulders. Mrs. Tonderum turned off the lights and ran screaming into another room to get her husband. They looked out windows and saw nothing. Mrs. Bruhl added that the kitchen window at the back of the house is seven feet above the ground. Also neighborhood residents reported hearing noises about the same time that evening.

The following afternoon the Tonderums and Bruhls searched the yard and found indentations resembling footprints all over the yard. Mrs. Bruhl said there were "big ones and little ones," the larger ones showing four toes and being three-quarters of an inch deep. Mrs. Bruhl was convinced that the experience was too much trouble to be a prank and that a tremendous weight was necessary to press the tracks into the ground as she saw them. Clarion Police Chief Robert Shaw made a cast of a large indentation

Fig. 4. One of several prints found in a field as told in No. 12. This track is probably that of a horse. Photograph courtesy of Ruth Hall and the Fort Dodge Messenger.

Fig. 5. Richard Rasmussen, Blaine McCurry, and Mark Thompson are shown in the field northwest of Renwick, Iowa. Their experiences are related in Nos. 12 and 13. Photograph courtesy of Ruth Hall and the Fort Dodge Messenger.

that was described as about 20 inches long, four inches at the narrowest part of it and seven inches wide at its widest (Figure 6). Reportedly no toe marks are visible on the cast (Hall 1978f).

On the 27th of October Police Chief Shaw announced that some Clarion youths had admitted running around Clarion wearing a monkey mask. They denied being in the neighborhood of the Tonderums. The dates for their activity were not specified. In any case Chief Shaw was satisfied that they were not involved in the Tonderum experience, and he remained puzzled by that incident (Fort Dodge Messenger 1978b).

THE TRACKS

In the course of the Iowa stories tracks have been described, casted, and photographed. They differ among themselves as well as from those reported in South Dakota in 1977 (Hall 1978:70-73). When discussing the latter reports we suggested that different kinds of primates might be responsible for the accumulation of stories commonly labeled "Bigfoot" (and "Sasquatch") reports. If this were so, there would be some differences in the feet and therefore the tracks left by these animals. Also, misidentification of impressions in the ground and outright hoaxes may be responsible for a variety of tracks. We think examples of all these causes are to be found in the stories from Iowa.

In No. 4 a search in a cornfield turned up impressions thought to have claws evident at the front and back. Ultimately, they were explained as being produced by water dripping from leaves of corn.

In No. 12 some of the tracks discovered in the vicinity were clearly those left by a horse. Figure 4 looks like such a horse print, and Mr. Grebner identified some of the tracks on the spot as left by his horse. Further, while news accounts give the impression that the report of an unusual animal in No. 12 has been explained as a man on horseback, Mr. Grebner reportedly said he was breaking a colt on the evening of the 25th of September. The animal was seen on the 27th, two days later. While the horse tracks have a part in explaining some of this story, the horse and rider likely do not.

By their appearance and the circumstances surrounding their introduction, we think the tracks and the stories in Nos. 6 and 14 may result from pranks produced by one or more unknown persons during the "Bigfoot" publicity. A number of things about these particular tracks cause suspicion. (1) Only four toes appear on an otherwise human-like foot. (2) The tracks appear shallow at the front and back. They are so shallow at the front that one cast has broken just behind the "toes." The track of a two-legged animal ought to be deeper at these points where the weight would be concentrated during the step. (3) The stride (if correctly understood from the description) is no greater than a human stride. (4) No sighting of an unusual animal is associated with the track location or the immediate vicinity. (5) The casts show only left feet. (6) The proportions of this impression are unlike the proportions of any alleged "Bigfoot" tracks that we know of elsewhere. The measurements are determined with a definite scale in Figure 7 to be nineteen and one-half inches by five inches.

The cast made at Clarion (Figure 6) in No. 14 shares most of these suspicious characteristics, suggesting that it was made by the same track-maker as in No. 6. To explain Nos. 6 and 14 a likely hypothesis

Fig. 6. The plaster cast made from an indentation at the Tonderum residence in Clarion, Iowa. Described as about 20 inches long and 7 inches wide. Photograph courtesy of the Fort Dodge Messenger.

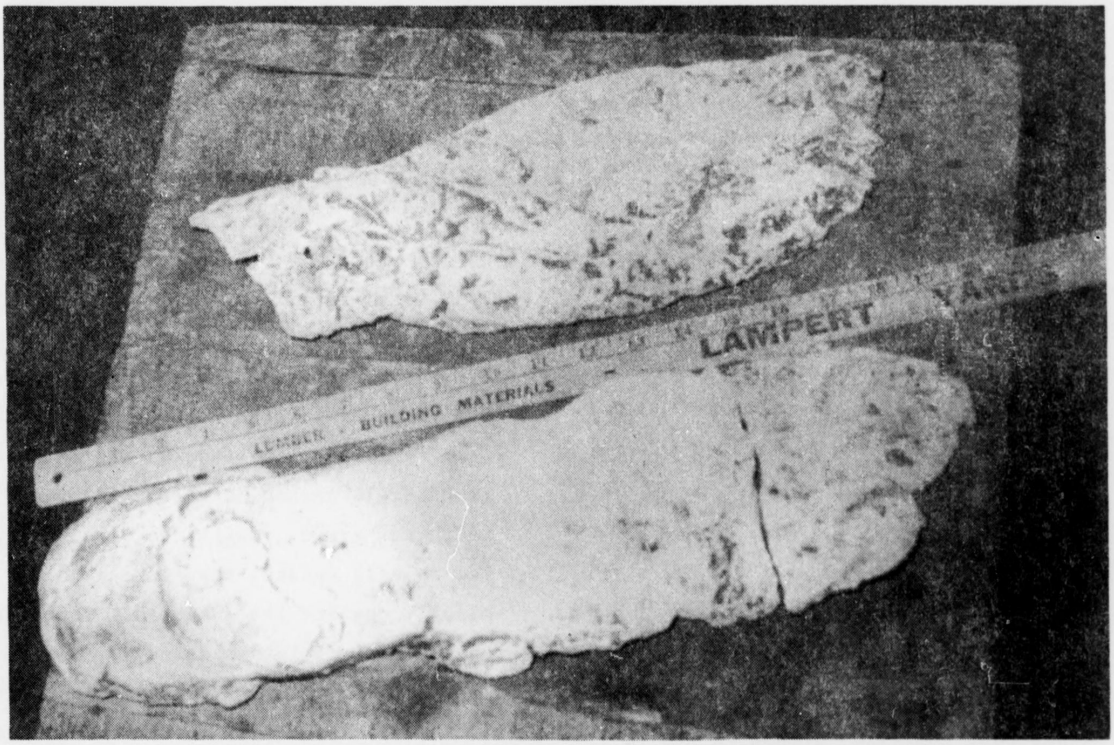

Fig. 7. Two casts made by Ellis Shellmeyer (also shown in Fig. 2) near West Bend, Iowa. This photograph is published here for the first time. Taken by Jane Whitmore for the Emmetsburg Publishing Company, Emmetsburg, Iowa.

would be that someone was motivated by the "Bigfoot" publicity to create some false tracks near West Bend. Then by early October when the animal reports were coming from places progressively eastward, the same person could have traveled to the east of the latest reports near Renwick and stopped in Clarion. It would have been simple to choose a lighted window in one of the houses. Only a shape was seen outside a window. This effect could have been created with a dark silhouette held up and waved outside the window. A single, oval-shaped, yellow reflection was reported in the middle of the shape. Possibly this was produced by something as simple as a bicycle reflector attached to the silhouette. Only in this story was a yellow reflection reported. Yellow eye color does not occur among the known apes (Sanderson 1961:249). The entire incident may have been an attempt to imitate story No. 7 that was widely publicized prior to No. 14. In that case an animal's face was at a window showing two bright red eyes, probably the result of eyeshine, a feature of nocturnal animals.

Seemingly the people named in these stories are all the victims of pranks. There is nothing to indicate that any person named in any part of this paper has knowingly perpetrated a hoax. The facts surrounding these tracks and the illustrations of them available to us are presented here for anyone desiring to draw their own conclusions about them. A different kind of track, that found at the Newell place, will be considered below in comparison with footprints previously found outside of Iowa.

INTERPRETATION OF THE STORIES

We discount the value of Nos. 6 and 14. Also No. 10 is adequately explained internally as a false alarm caused by a farm implement mistaken for a living thing. The animal described in the remaining stories is not easily identified as any known animal. When the stories began, a migrating bear was suggested (Hall 1978a). No one who saw the animal compared it to a bear. At that time Sheriff Marvin Andersen checked for any incidents of an escaped bear or monkey and found no leads to explain the reports being made to his office (Hall 1978b; Algona Upper Des Moines 1978a). The presence of at least one large non-human primate would explain most of what was reported.

The descriptive elements that occur include: estimated heights of four to seven feet, hairy body, brownish-black color, flat-nosed face, deep-set eyes, red eyeshine, long white teeth, forehead like a big bump. The noises made by the animal were whining and screaming sounds. Its activities were largely nocturnal.

In No. 11 both red and blue eyes were reported, possibly resulting from eyeshine and suggesting that two animals were in the area. While other stories were told in this vicinity we cannot be sure that this brief report may not result from another prank or from mistaken identity. Other elements allowing for two animals are the range of heights reported and tracks both 11 inches long (No. 8) and an unexplained track of 14 inches long (No. 12) where no width was given. While the possibility of two animals exists, the stories do not clearly resolve the question. Certainly one unusual animal is necessary to explain them.

Some movement of this animal is indicated in the stories. The first four stories occur in Ottosen at the end of July. The animal

returns to public notice outside of the town in early September in Nos. 5, 7, and 8. In mid-September movement southeastward is indicated with a report near Humboldt in No. 9. Nos. 11, 12, and 13 take place further eastward near Renwick. In No. 13 deer are considered to be an explanation of eyes seen in a field. But no deer were reported seen, while the screaming and walking sounds also heard in the area would be explained by a large primate and not by deer.

While the stories have overall similarities with the South Dakota reports in 1977, similarities that led to the application of the "Bigfoot" label, significant differences do occur. The posture, gait, and track of this animal as described here do the most to indicate what kind of primate may have been in Iowa. In two cases (Nos. 4 and 8) the animal was observed for some length of time. The animal when standing was described as having stood "hunched over" (in No. 4) and as possessing a "bad slouch" (in No. 8). Also an important characteristic in the daylight observation of the animal in No. 4 was its movement alternately on two and four legs. This manner of movement and the semi-erect posture among primates suggest an ape-like animal.

The track found at the Newell residence in No. 8 is the most important indicator of what kind of primate may be involved. The appearance of this track in Figure 3 is ambiguous. To add to the written description provided, the writer and photographer in this case, Steven Hakeman, kindly provided a sketch of the print as he saw it. The sketch is reproduced in Figure 8b. He added the information that "two of the toes appeared to have claw marks or at least obvious indentations near the ends" (Hakeman 1978c).

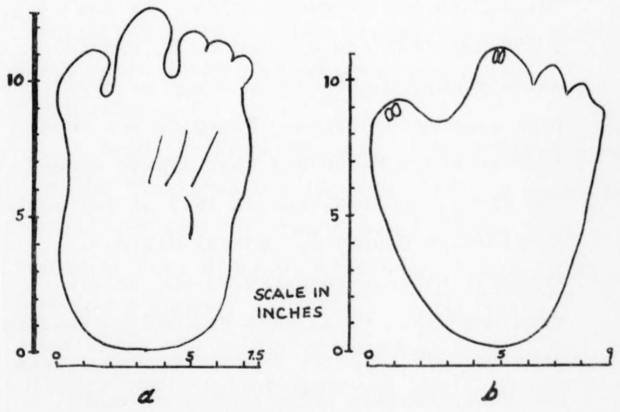

Fig. 8. Outlines of tracks with opposed toes indicating an affinity with pongid or ape-like evolutionary lines:
a) From a reconstruction by Tschernezky of a yeti foot using a photograph taken in Asia by Eric Shipton;
b) Sketch made by Steven Hakeman of the track found at the Newell residence in Iowa. Re-drawn here by the author.

Fig. 9. A track found in a creek bed near Decatur, Illinois, in 1962. A twelve-inch ruler lies beside the track. Originally a color photograph. Re-printed with the permission of the photographer, Loren E. Coleman.
© Loren Coleman.

Combined with the general description, posture, and gait this track identifies this animal as an ape-like primate of some unknown type. Among the known animals the greatest similarities in the feet occur in chimpanzees and gorillas. The appearance of such a track-maker existing in the wild in Iowa would be outlandish if there did not already exist a history of very ape-like animals on this continent.

A collection of diverse reports already exists to suggest that some kind of animal quite ape-like has been present in central North America for a long time. Loren E. Coleman began collecting these accounts in 1960 and prepared a paper on the subject for a seminar on zoogeography at the University of Illinois, Urbana, in 1973 (Coleman 1973). The reports that he considers center in the Bottomlands of rivers in the South where he proposes the network of closed-canopy deciduous and mixed forests provide habitat for a population of apes that have been described by people throughout the area. While the reports are numerous and date from the 1800's they often lack detail and may not all be attributable to the one kind of primate being considered here. The best evidence he presents is a track photograph (Coleman 1973: Plate V) taken by him in the spring of 1962 (Figure 9). The track was found by one of the Coleman family in a dry creek bed near Decatur, Illinois. The impression is a large one measuring ten inches in length and six inches at its widest point. An opposed great toe is clearly evident on the right side.

The reports of the "Lockridge Monster" that occurred in Iowa in 1975 may be part of this record of ape-like beings. In July of 1975 an animal with a monkey face was reported by Gloria Olson north of Lockridge, Iowa (Figure 1). Just before dark she was driving past a deserted farmyard when she saw the animal that had hair all over it and was about four feet tall (Koonse 1975a). During the night of 3rd October that year Herbert Peiffer, a farmer north of Lockridge, saw an animal on four legs and then on two legs in the headlights of his tractor. It had a shaggy black appearance and stood five feet tall when on two legs (Keller 1975). Others who saw the animal, such as farmer Lowell Smith, couldn't identify it and didn't think it was a bear. Imprecise descriptions of tracks suggested there may have been two sizes in a range of 10 to 13 inches (Koonse 1975a, 1975b).

The movement of these animals up the northwest-southeast-trending rivers of Iowa would link the Lockridge and Ottosen stories. Considering the rarity of this type of primate our opinion would be that the animal or animals responsible for the Lockridge stories were later responsible for the stories in Humboldt County in 1978.

We have no good basis for speculation as to why an animal of this type would turn up in north-central Iowa in an area of cornfields and soybean fields. We can point out that the appearance of single animals beyond the common range of their type does occur often. Examples are moose from northern Minnesota that appear around the state, in Iowa, and in 1978 as far south as Randolph County in central Missouri (Moberly Monitor-Index 1978) and an elk from the Black Hills that reached northwestern Iowa in 1978 (Appleby 1978). Wooded creeks and river courses offer routes of travel with cover for even large animals, whatever their motivation.

THE YETI

The phrase "Abominable Snowman" might best be defined these days as a journalistic

device for snappy headlines and quick identification. The animal this phrase is supposed to identify has a physique and fabulous habits (backward feet, living in snowfields, etc.) that have been nurtured in fiction and careless journalism. The device has obscured the likely activities of various unknown primates reported over many years in Asia. Among them is a large ape-like creature whose track was photographed by mountain climber Eric Shipton in 1951 on the Menlung Glacier near the Tibet-Nepal border. Wladimir Tschernezky reconstructed the foot of the track-maker (Figure 8a) working from Shipton's now-famous photograph (Tschernezky 1960). The animal's tracks have been reliably observed and photographed as recently as 1972 (McNeely, Cronin and Emery 1973:65,67). While the word "yeti" has suffered as much misuse as the "Snowman" phrase, we will use the word "yeti" to refer to this particular animal here.

The feet sketched in Figure 8 share similarities in their broad shape throughout, in the opposed great toe, in a second toe that is large and the longest of the toes, and in the same overall toe configuration. The animals suspected to make these tracks--despite the distances involved--are also similarly described.

Amid the many accounts of hairy creatures in the Himalayas are reports with the essential build and gait that were found in the Iowa stories (see McNeely, Cronin and Emery 1973: 70 for a summary of yeti characteristics). And there are tracks as shown in Figure 8a, though they are not even--we must note--as clearly linked to specific sightings as Figure 8b is in Iowa. When yeti reports have been taken seriously the fossil primate Gigantopithecus has been frequently put forward as the best candidate for the ancestry of the yeti (for examples see Tschernezky 1960:497 and McNeely, Cronin, and Emery 1973:71-73). This fossil type has a natural appeal because of its massive jaw and large teeth and the lack of any recognized descendants. Recent opinion has portrayed Gigantopithecus as much resembling a gorilla except for a higher face and a greater size (Simons and Ettel 1970). In this view the height of the erect animal would be nine feet. Opinion has varied because only mandibles and teeth have survived to provide a basis for knowledge of the creature. Postcranial skeletal remains--parts of bone below the skull--are entirely lacking. Ultimately postcranial fossil remains will have to resolve the issue of the posture of Gigantopithecus. We think the resolution will be more towards an upright animal that will agree with an earlier opinion of von Koenigswald (Simons and Ettel 1970:78).

The massive jaws of Gigantopithecus indicate an animal much larger than necessary to explain the specific yeti and Iowa reports and tracks being considered. Or to put it another way the animals in these reports are not large enough to match Gigantopithecus. Not that this fossil form and its maybe-descendants are without a place in the variety of primate accounts that have been labeled "Bigfoot" and "Abominable Snowman." We think that would be an altogether different discussion.

The better candidate we propose to account for the tracks in Figure 8 is the fossil form Dryopithecus indicus. Here is an animal of a size of gorillas and a bit larger. These fossils have been identified from the Siwalik Hills in West Pakistan and possibly from China (Simons 1972:239-241). Technically any living representative of such a species should be referred to as a descendant of D. indicus which is defined

as an extinct form of primate known to have lived some millions of years ago. The circumstances that could bring D. indicus to be found in North America must be discussed extensively elsewhere as must the absence--well-known and often-invoked--of fossil remains to support the presence of any kind of unusual primate in North America.

CONCLUSION

The "Bigfoot" reports from north-central Iowa as recovered from newspaper sources seem to be attributable to a number of causes: pranks, human error and possibly one or two animals of an unknown type. Special caution must be taken about the varieties of tracks that turn up in the course of examining such animal stories--both not to accept them too readily because they are conveniently placed and not to reject them too quickly when they possess unusual features. We think it is valuable to collect all such happenings and examine them with attention to the history of such reports. We encourage the collection of all such modern accounts, investigation of reports when possible, and the dissemination of findings.

The track reported near Ottosen, Iowa in September of 1978 has similarities with tracks previously suspected to be made by ape-like animals elsewhere in North America and in Asia. An animal of the size, behavior, and build of a large ape was reported at the location of the Ottosen track and in the vicinity for several days. Similar reports exist in other places in association with the other tracks. These tracks have not been recorded under ideal conditions. Even if they were so recorded, the sample of tracks that we know about is so small that they would likely be discounted by many as meaningful. However the presence of some kind of large and certainly rare ape in North America, such as a living descendant of Dryopithecus indicus, would explain so much of a fragmented but constant production of stories of "gorilla-like" animals that we consider it likely they do exist. As far as we know no one has made on-the-spot enquiries in the prime areas of the North American Bottomlands about this kind of animal. Until such an effort is seriously carried out the record will probably remain as fragmented and unsatisfying as it is today.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While preparing this paper we have enjoyed the full cooperation of the following people and Iowa newspaper publishers: Ruth Hall and Janey Spangler of the Fort Dodge Messenger; Tom Waller of the Algona Publishing Co., publishers of the Kossuth County Advance and the Algona Upper Des Moines; Steven Hakeman of the Humboldt Printing Co., publishers of the Humboldt Independent and the Humboldt Republican; Jane Whitmore of the Emmetsburg Publishing Co., publishers of the Emmetsburg Reporter, Emmetsburg Democrat, and the Palo Alto Reminder: Ken Braband of the Eagle Grove Eagle. Also we thank Loren E. Coleman of Cambridge, Massachusetts for his years of cooperation.

REFERENCES CITED

Algona Kossuth County Advance

1978a August 7 "Ottosen not happy with its notoriety" Algona, Iowa.

1978b September 18 "An ugly hoax, or is 'Bigfoot' at Ottosen?" Algona, Iowa.

1978c September 25 "Footprints at West Bend?" Algona, Iowa.

Algona Upper Des Moines

1978a August 3 "Ottosen excitement: A monkey or a hoax?" Algona, Iowa.

1978b August 17 "Where boys say they saw 'furry head'" Algona, Iowa.

Appleby, Bud
1978 December 2 "Let rare elk wander Iowa in peace, hunters asked" Des Moines Register, Des Moines, Iowa.

Braband, Ken
1978 October 4 "Some possible answers to 'Bigfoot' mystery" Eagle Grove Eagle, Eagle Grove, Iowa.

Coleman, Loren E.
1973 The occurrence of wild apes in North America. Unpublished paper.

Fort Dodge Messenger
1978a August 15 "No further sightings of Ottosen creature" Fort Dodge, Iowa.

1978b October 28 "Youths admit wearing monkey mask in Clarion" Fort Dodge, Iowa.

Hakeman, Steven
1978a August 5 "Has Bigfoot come to Humboldt County?" Humboldt Independent, Humboldt, Iowa.

1978b September 16 "The hairy creature is back" Humboldt Independent, Humboldt, Iowa.

1978c October 23 personal communication.

Hall, Mark A.
1978 Contemporary stories of "Taku He" or "Bigfoot" in South Dakota as drawn from newspaper accounts. The Minnesota Archaeologist 37:63-78.

Hall, Ruth
1978a August 1 "Ottosen safari not sure of quarry" Fort Dodge Messenger, Fort Dodge, Iowa.

1978b August 3 "Ottosen's unidentified animal still at large, pets attacked" Fort Dodge Messenger, Fort Dodge, Iowa.

1978c September 14 "Large, black hairy creature again sighted near Ottosen" Fort Dodge Messenger, Fort Dodge, Iowa.

1978d September 29 "'Bigfoot' sighting reported at Renwick" Fort Dodge Messenger, Fort Dodge, Iowa.

1978e September 30 "'Bigfoot' search continues: Man on horse is one answer" Fort Dodge Messenger, Fort Dodge, Iowa.

1978f October 6 "Bigfoot track investigated near Clarion" Fort Dodge Messenger, Fort Dodge, Iowa.

Keller, Richard
1975 October 17 "A bear? Mysterious beast seen near Lockridge" The Fairfield Ledger, Fairfield, Iowa.

Klaus, Steven
1978a September 24 "Reports of hairy beast, night screams have Iowa town on edge" Des Moines Register, Des Moines, Iowa.

1978b October 1 "Omah gosh! Yeti another Bigfoot seen" Des Moines Register, Des Moines, Iowa.

1978c November 12 "Bigfoot phenomenon is very much alive in Iowa" Des Moines Register, Des Moines, Iowa.

Koonse, Alan
1975a October 25 "Elusive 'Lockridge Monster" Des Moines Register, Des Moines, Iowa.

1975b December 15 "Iowa's own Lockridge Monster" Des Moines Register, Des Moines, Iowa.

McNeely, J.A. and E.W. Cronin, H. B. Emery
1973 The yeti--not a snowman. Oryx 12:65-73. May.

Moberly Monitor-Index
1978 November 19 "Moose spotted in area" Moberly, Missouri.

Sanderson, Ivan
1961 Abominable Snowmen. Chilton, Philadelphia.

Simons, Elwyn L.
1972 Primate evolution. Macmillan, New York.

Simons, Elwyn L. and Peter C. Ettel
1970 Gigantopithecus. Scientific American 222:76-85. January.

Tschernezky, Wladimir
1960 A reconstruction of the foot of the "Abominable Snowman". Nature 186:496-497. May 7.

Whitmore, Jane
1978 September 21 "Do big foot prints mean 'Bigfoot' was a Palo Alto?" The Democrat, Emmetsburg, Iowa.